



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	March 28, 2005	Interpretation #	05-005
Topic	Fire Alarms for Large Family Day Cares		
Code Section(s)	2001 California Building Code, Section 310.15.4		
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Section 310.15.4 of the California Building Code states that large day care centers must have at least one manual device that can actuate a fire alarm signal at a minimum level of 15 db above ambient noise level. The “type” of alarm device “may be of any type acceptable to the enforcing agent, provided that such devices are distinctive in tone and are audible throughout the structure.” This sounds as if the cities have the discretion to require large family day cares to install any type of fire alarm the city fire departments (the “enforcing agents”) deem “acceptable.”

However, Section 310.15.5 states that cities may not adopt or enforce any rule relating to fire and life safety that is inconsistent with those adopted by the State Fire Marshal, unless the rule applies to all single family residences.

The state code apparently does not require hard-wired alarms in large family day cares. What is the State Fire Marshal’s position on whether a city has the authority to require hard wired alarms on large family day care homes, if the same city does not require hard-wired alarms in all single family residences?

The fire alarm requirement for licensed large family day cares stands on its own and has no direct connection to any requirements for single family residences in your community. While it is not the intent of Section 310.15.4 to require a fire alarm system, it is the intent that a manual device be provided, that when activated, initiates an audible fire alarm signal that is a minimum level of 15db above ambient noise level throughout the structure. (An example could be a pull station connected to a bell or horn). The method for achieving the alarm shall be up to the local fire authority.